



Childcare/Play Areas in Shelters

CHILDCARE AND PLAY AREAS ARE DISCOURAGED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Appoint a person in charge (PIC), preferably someone with day care experience, to monitor the childcare and/or play areas and implement sanitation procedures. The PIC should ensure that the guidelines below are followed to keep children healthy and safe.

GENERAL OPERATIONS

- Do not allow children with symptoms of contagious disease in the childcare/play areas.

Handwashing

Keep hand sanitizer out of the reach of children. Handwashing with soap and water is preferred whenever possible for young children who may put their hands in their mouths.

- Locate childcare/play areas adjacent to handwashing facilities, if possible. If not possible, set up a hand sanitizing station.
- Require parents, children, and staff to wash or sanitize hands before entering and leaving the childcare/play area.

Diapering

- Provide a diaper changing area supplied with a hand sink, soap, and paper towels or a hand sanitizing station located nearby; a waste receptacle; and disposable diaper changing pads.
- Ensure childcare workers are wearing gloves to change a diaper and are cleaning their hands and the diapered child's hands immediately after the diaper is changed and the gloves are removed.
- Ensure the diaper changing table is scrubbed with soap and water then disinfected between uses.

Naptime

- Space naptime mats or cribs at least 6 feet apart, if possible, and place children head to toe.
- Clean and disinfect mats/cribs between use by different children.

Cleaning Supplies

- Provide:
 - Cleaners to remove visible dirt
 - [EPA-Registered Disinfectants for Norovirus](#) / [EPA-Registered Disinfectants for COVID-19](#). (Refer to Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting below.)
 - Spray bottles and labels
 - Funnels to pour chemical solution into spray bottles
 - Dish detergent if using a dishwasher
 - Alcohol wipes (at least 70% alcohol) if cleaning toys that cannot be immersed in water
 - Disposable gloves

CLEANING, SANITIZING, AND DISINFECTING

Cleaning – to remove dirt by scrubbing and washing with a detergent and rinsing with water. Cleaning will expose any remaining germs for sanitizing or disinfecting.

Sanitizing – reduces the number of germs to safe levels on food-contact surfaces (dishes, utensils, highchair trays) and toys that may be put in a child’s mouth.

Disinfecting – destroys germs on a cleaned, hard, non-porous surfaces (diaper changing tables, doorknobs, bathroom surfaces).

- Select sanitizing products that are safe for food-contact surfaces and objects children may place in their mouths.
- Select a sanitizing/disinfecting product that is an [EPA-Registered Disinfectant for Norovirus](#). Some products such as chlorine bleach and quaternary ammonia may be used for both sanitizing and disinfecting but with different directions for preparing and using the disinfectant for sanitizing or for disinfecting.)
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, use a product that is also an [EPA-Registered Disinfectant for COVID-19](#). (Chlorine bleach and quaternary ammonia are effective against both COVID-19 and Norovirus.)
- Follow the manufacturer’s direction for use of the sanitizer or disinfectant including safety precautions, use for food-contact surfaces or contact by children, and amount of time to leave the sanitizer/disinfectant in contact with the surface/object.

Safety

- Do not allow children to handle cleaning and disinfecting products.
- Clean and disinfect toys, other objects, and surfaces when children are not around and ensure the items are out of children’s reach until completely dry.
- Provide adequate ventilation when disinfecting to prevent inhalation of fumes.
- Refer to [Six Steps to Safe Disinfectant Use](#).

Develop a Schedule for Routine Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces such as diaper-changing stations, nap pads, doorknobs, light switches, sink fixtures, countertops, chairs, cubbies, playground structures, floors, etc. based on traffic but a minimum of every 2-3 hours during heavy use.
- Clean and sanitize/disinfect toys daily or more frequently when the “dirty” box is full or clean toys are needed.

Toys

All toys should be compliant with Consumer Safety regulations.

Discard Donated Toys That Are Hard to Clean

- Stuffed or cloth toys
- Bath toys or other toys that may hold water and harbor germs
- Toys containing small parts, broken parts, sharp points, finger traps or loose ribbons

- Books, crayons, and board games that are visibly soiled

Organize Toys for Cleaning and Sanitizing/Disinfecting

- Provide 2 toy storage areas segregated from one another. Label one for clean toys and one for dirty toys.
- Place the following toys in the "dirty" toy box or storage area to be cleaned according to a predetermined schedule:
 - Visibly dirty toys
 - Toys that have been in a child's mouth or have been used by a group of infants or toddlers
- All toys in the dirty toy box/storage area should be examined again and discarded for broken parts or inability to be cleaned and disinfected.
- Clean and sanitize/disinfect the remaining, intact cleanable toys in the dirty toy box according to your predetermined cleaning schedule.

Cleaning , Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Toys

Toys must be cleaned first of visible dirt for the sanitizer or disinfectant to be effective.

- For toys that cannot be immersed in water (ex., windup toys):
 - Remove visible dirt.
 - Disinfect with alcohol wipes (70% alcohol wipes/towelettes made for disinfecting).
 - Keep the surface wet for at least 1 minute after using the wipe.
 - Air dry.

Note: Alcohol wipes may damage the outside of electronic toys.

- For toys that can be immersed in water:
 - Use a dishwasher. (Dishwashers will clean and sanitize the toys.)

OR

Manually wash, rinse, and then sanitize with an EPA-Registered disinfectant for Norovirus and COVID-19.

 - Follow manufacturers' instructions for preparing and using the sanitizing solution.

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